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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 07 USNATO 000623

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SUBJECT: NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL READOUT - NOVEMBER 28, 2007

REF: A: SECSTATE 159862

Classified By: DCM Richard G. Olson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C/NF) Summary from the NAC Meeting:

-- Afghanistan: The SYG noted that the first draft of the Autumn 2007 ISAF Periodic Mission Review has been sent to the Policy Coordinating Group (PCG). Chairman of the Military Committee (CMC) General Henault noted that SHAPE's PRT initiatives are being studied by the Military Committee. ISAF operational tempo remains high. The number of incidents through October 2007 is greater than in all of 2006. Senior Civilian Representative (SCR) Everts, who participated by VTC from Kabul, noted early reports on civilian casualties in Nurestan and poor relations between parliament and President Karzai. He also briefed on reconciliation measures with the Taliban and corruption issues in Afghanistan.

Several PermReps called for ISAF to develop a rapid reaction public affairs capability. Other questions were raised about the reconciliation process, the status of Rule of Law, police reform, synergy among NATO and other international organizations, corruption, UNAMA coordination, ANA deployments, the security situation in Kabul, and the Pakistani border region.

-- Balkans: The SYG informed the NAC that there is no indication that the Troika's efforts will result in a settlement. The SYG will travel to Kosovo on Friday. The CMC commented that after the November 17 elections, KFOR has

maintained a high level of operations including night ops. CMC Henault said SHAPE is planning for contingencies and is having discussions with EUFOR on crisis response should there be simultaneous crises in both Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

-- Darfur: The SYG reported that Government of Sudan obstructionism and deficiencies in enablers continue to slow UNAMID deployment and undermine the effectiveness of units that are deployed. NATO will transport two remaining AU battalions in the coming days to complete its contribution to the AU's autumn rotation.

-- Iraq: The Periodic Mission Review (PMR) for NATO Training Mission-Iraq (NTM-I) has been provisionally approved by the PCG. Ambassador Nuland reported on the "Declaration of Principles for a Long-Term Relationship of Cooperation and Friendship between the Republic of Iraq and the U.S.," signed by President Bush and PM Maliki on November 26.

-- Response to Terrorism: CMC Henault commented that Operation Active Endeavor was engaged in a large surge activity in the Mediterranean, with its normal complement augmented by the 17-ship NATO maritime group that was in the area while completing its recent circumnavigation of Africa.

-- Report of the Senior Resource Board: The NAC noted the SRB 2007 Annual Report, but was unable to agree to SRB Policy Guidance for the next five years.

-- Statements on Political Subjects: Ambassador Nuland

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briefed the NAC on the Middle East Peace Conference in Annapolis and on the difficult U.S.) Russia bilateral discussions on CFE and missile defense that took place in Washington November 28. Several Allies thanked the U.S. for efforts to preserve the CFE treaty and noted the importance of showing unity should Russia withdraw from the adapted CFE treaty on December 12. The Baltic states noted the need for all Allies to be fully consulted on any negotiations on the CFE.

-- AOB: The UK reported that five nations had circulated a joint letter with ideas for overcoming NATO's chronic shortage of helicopters and a draft NAC tasking for further action. Several Allies offered statements of support.

END SUMMARY.

Afghanistan

12. (C/NF) The SYG noted that the first draft of the Autumn 2007 ISAF Periodic Mission Review has moved out of the Military Committee and gone to the PCG.

13. (C/NF) CMC Henault noted that SHAPE's PRT initiatives are being studied by the Military Committee, based on proposals raised at the April 2007 SHAPE PRT Conference, and the MC will provide advice to the NAC. Many proposals address the civilian side of PRT activities and include enhancing unity of PRT efforts.

14. (C/NF) IMS Assistant Director for Intelligence Karen Laino briefed the NAC on ISAF operations, stating that operational tempo remains high and ISAF Operation PAMIR continues. The Theatre Task Force is working in Kandahar with CIMIC ops along the Ring Road. The number of incidents involving ISAF troops through October 2007 is greater than in all of 2006. In RC-North, ISAF supported an ANA-led operation that cleared areas of Ghormach district in Badghis province of Opposing Militant Forces (OMF). In RC-West, ISAF supported ANSF efforts to expel OMF from Gulestan and Bakwa districts in Farah province. In RC-South, Task Force Uruzgan is operating

in the Baluchi pass and other areas of Uruzgan province. Operations are ongoing in northern Helmand, near the Kajaki dam, where OMF are proving resilient. In RC-East, ANA 203rd Corps led an operation that cleared part of Paktika province of OMF.

15. (C/NF) In Pakistan, the Pakistani Army continues with Operation Mountain Viper. Rawalpindi suicide attacks may trigger Pakistani Army response in FATA that could put more pressure on OMF there.

16. (C/NF) SCR Everts, participating by VTC from Kabul, noted early reports on civilian casualties in Nurestan when a roadwork crew was reportedly struck, possibly by ISAF aircraft, resulting in 10-20 civilian KIA. He reported on the state of poor relations between Parliament and President Karzai, relating to Karzai's poor handling of the investigation of the November 6 Baghlan bombing. The Speaker of Parliament led a walkout in Parliament that finally ended

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after Karzai met with the Speaker. Everts said this event illustrated how Karzai is insulated and has not built bridges in Parliament. Everts briefed that reconciliation with the Taliban proceeds on two tracks. The PTS program, which has weaknesses but also merit, aims at low-level insurgents. In parallel, Karzai is engaging directly with high-level Taliban leaders, and he wants an ad hoc Afghan approach without any international interference. He has had some Taliban response to his feelers. Of interest, Mullah Omar's former spokesman has proposed a "Peace Commission" composed of religious scholars and respected non-government members. The Commission, a "trial balloon," would be a new and tentative idea that has not been made public yet. Karzai is engaging in these talks because he sees a stalemate on the battlefield. Everts also stated that corruption continues to be an enormous impediment to progress in all areas. Karzai has announced a reshuffle of some senior officials, but little progress has been made.

17. (C/NF) There was a screening of a CNN newsclip which used a piece of declassified military video showing a Taliban hiding under a burqa, and then ISAF aircraft not striking a building where a Taliban meeting was taking place because a small boy was sitting outside the doorway. NATO Spokesman Appathurai commented in the video that OMF made more effective use of video with the media thus far than ISAF.

18. (C/NF) Ambassador Nuland said that she had been unable to get clarification from USG sources on the Nurestan civilian casualties incident, noting that the first reports were AP press reports quoting local Afghan officials, which highlights the need for ISAF to have a rapid reaction public affairs capability. The SYG concurred, noting that PermReps discussed the importance of strategic messaging during their Away Day discussions on November 27. CMC Henault responded that SHAPE had not yet provided him with any clarification either. SCR Everts, too, noted the need to wait for clarification. Ambassador Nuland then reviewed Operation ATTAL in Paktika in November, in which U.S. forces supported ANA in clearing OMF out of a large area that had been devastated by OMF. Paktika's governor then held a shura attended by 1,600 locals. Unfortunately, ISAF had missed an opportunity and the good news story was never covered by the press.

19. (C/NF) Canadian PermRep McRae asked how the reconciliation process is playing in Parliament and among different ethnic groups. Everts responded that the Peace Commission idea is very tentative, but that loyal Afghan opposition figures, such as Rabbani, appear to support the idea as long as it is not just a "Pashtun Deal," but includes all Afghan communities. McRae also asked about the status of Rule of Law and police reform and Everts replied that "we've wasted years but we're turning the corner now." He stated that CSTC-A now has excellent leadership and is making progress,

and EUPOL is getting better and communication is improving with CSTC-A.

¶10. (C/NF) Spanish PermRep Benevides noted that ISAF must quickly and publicly make clear that it is investigating the Nurestan civilian casualty incident. He asked about "synergy" among NATO, EU, and UN efforts in Afghanistan

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saying this should be a Bucharest deliverable. Everts agreed, saying synergy has been difficult to achieve.

¶11. (C/NF) Norwegian PermRep Traavik expressed concern about corruption and impunity, noting the recent case where five perpetrators convicted of an attack in Maymana that killed one Finnish and injured three Norwegian soldiers were released from prison after three months. Everts noted this example was not an isolated case, but illustrates a pattern of corruption throughout the police and judicial system. There has been little progress in this area, Everts added.

¶12. (C/NF) German PermRep Brandenburg regretted UNAMA's slow movement in coordinating NGO efforts to follow Operation HAREKATE YOLO II in RC-West. Everts agreed, saying only now UNAMA is starting to get out into the field for a needs assessment, and even so insisted that ISAF representatives not join them "so as not to confuse military and civilian efforts." Everts said he had expressed his disappointment over this behavior to UNAMA but also noted that ISAF could have done more to engage UNAMA during the operation's planning phases. He praised the U.S. effort in Konar for meeting with elders and arranging reconstruction funding before commencing military operations.

¶13. (C/NF) Dutch PermRep Schaper noted that Laino had briefed on an increasing number of "incidents" in 2007 over 2006 and asked how to interpret this. CMC Henault noted that ISAF activities, e.g. Operation PAMIR, have increased over the year, so this increase in activities has increased the contacts between ISAF and OMF. Also, because winter is late this year, the fighting has continued deeper into the autumn. Everts added that the security situation is neither getting better nor worse. Schaper also asked whether suicide attacks are perceived as a victory for OMF, and Everts responded that by creating a climate of fear in which it is believed the Afghan government and ISAF cannot protect civilians, such attacks are propaganda victories for the OMF.

¶14. (C/NF) Hungarian PermRep Martinusz asked about the effect of the Afghan government's redeployment of ANA battalions, since it has recently deployed units from the north to the south. He asked whether this allowed the OMF to exploit the lack of security forces in the north, for example with the Baghlan bombing. Everts responded that the North is a police problem and that the ANA are better deployed to the south.

¶15. (C/NF) French PermRep Duque asked about the security situation in Kabul and its environs. Everts responded that it depends on the area, with some areas improving. He added that throughout Afghanistan (for example in Gazni), when good officials are appointed they are able to make significant improvement in the security situation.

¶16. (C/NF) UK PermRep Eldon asked for more information on Pakistani army activities in FATA, and Everts opined that Karzai is "gleeful" with the problems in Pakistan's border areas, because he feels that it gives the Pakistani government a sense of the problems the Taliban create. Eldon cautioned that we should make sure the Nurestan civilian casualty incident was indeed caused by ISAF aircraft. The SYG responded that his reports indicated it was ISAF aircraft

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and agreed that ISAF should make it publicly known that it

will conduct a thorough investigation.

¶17. (C/NF) Lithuanian Deputy PermRep Varvuolis reviewed events at a recent PRT conference in Vilnius.

Balkans

¶18. (C/NF) The SYG informed the NAC that there is no sign that the Troika's efforts will result in a settlement. The SYG will travel to Kosovo on November 30. CMC commented that after the November 17 elections, KFOR has maintained a high level of operations including night ops. Ambassador Nuland asked about contingency planning in case of simultaneous crises in both BiH and Kosovo. CMC said SHAPE is planning for contingencies and is having discussions with EUFOR on crisis response.

Darfur

¶19. (C/NF) The SYG reported the UN is having great difficulty deploying UNAMID, the UN-AU hybrid force, due to the Sudanese government obstructionist behavior. Ambassador Nuland reported that UN USYG Guehenno's warned at the November 27 UNSCR meeting on Sudan that the obstacles from the government of Sudan and force shortfalls were putting the UNAMID at risk of failure. CMC said NATO will airlift two remaining AU battalions in the coming days to complete the autumn AU rotation schedule. He said NATO assistance to the AU had been significant and since October 6 NATO had airlifted 7,751 troops, 39 APCs, and 360 tons of equipment.

Iraq

¶20. (U) The SYG noted that the Policy Coordination Group (PCG) completed its work on the NTM-I PMR and it will now be forwarded to Ukraine for consultation and sent to the NAC for final approval. Ambassador Nuland, as per instruction in reftel A, briefed the NAC on the Declaration of Principles signed between the USG and GOI, highlighting that the declaration is the first step in a three step process, and that the U.S. hopes that the second step - the renewal of the UNSCR Chapter VII mandate - will be accomplished quickly. The Ambassador informed the NAC that she will distribute the declaration to all delegations.

Response to Terrorism

¶21. (C/NF) CMC Henault commented that Operation Active Endeavor was engaged in a large surge activity in the Mediterranean, with its normal complement augmented by the 17-ship NATO maritime group that was in the area while completing its recent circumnavigation of Africa.

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Senior Resource Board Annual Report

¶22. (C/NF) Following a briefing by the Chairman of the Senior Resource Board (SRB) on the 2007 SRB Annual Report, the Council noted the report, supported work on further improving resource management, but was unable to agree to the policy guidance for the 2009 to 2013 planning period. While all nations (except Turkey) advocated that future emphasis on restoration of existing capabilities should be limited to those supporting expeditionary capabilities, Turkey insisted that restorations should also support Article 5 missions,

thus static infrastructure in Europe. The Council tasked the SRB to continue discussions on the proposed policy guidance for NAC reconsideration in the future.

Statements on Political Subjects

¶23. (C/NF) Ambassador Nuland briefed the NAC on the Middle East Peace Conference in Annapolis. USNATO later circulated to Allies the joint understanding concluded by PM Olmert, President Abbas, and President Bush.

¶24. (C/NF) Ambassador Nuland also updated Allies on Russian DFM Kisljak's November 28 meetings in Washington with A/S Fried on CFE and A/S Rood on missile defense. USNATO later circulated to Allies the U.S. proposals on CFE and a non-paper on missile defense that had been discussed with Kisljak in Washington.

¶25. (C/NF) Spanish PermRep Benavides, as OSCE Chairman in Office, commented that Madrid was working with OSCE member states to prepare a paragraph, acceptable to all OSCE states, on CFE for the OSCE Ministerial Declaration. Benavides noted that Russian disagreement prevented declarations from two previous OSCE Ministerials.

¶26. (C/NF) Norway thanked the U.S. for the briefing on CFE, stressed the importance of Allied unity, and warned against a pattern in which Russia pockets concessions made by the Allies and then seeks more. The Estonian PermRep, later seconded by the Lithuanians and Estonians, expressed support for U.S. efforts to convince Russia to remain in the CFE, but said that any text that might have been proposed to the Russians had not been discussed with them. Hungary asked whether the U.S. was confident that proposal relating to Moldova and Georgia would be acceptable to those countries. Bulgaria said it thought it would be inappropriate to discuss any changes to the flank regime before it entered into force.

Turkey also stressed the need for Allied unity and noted that Russia deliberately sought to divide Allies on CFE. Ambassador Nuland reiterated that there had been extensive consultations with Allies, including the Baltics, on the proposals made to the Russians and said Moldova and Georgia had shown enormous generosity and flexibility and agree with the proposals made to the Russians.

AOB

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¶27. (C/NF) The UK Deputy PermRep noted that five nations (the UK, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Denmark, and Canada) sent a joint letter to the Secretary General with ideas for overcoming NATO's chronic shortage of helicopters. The UK-led effort (with plenty of text borrowed from a previous U.S. thought paper written to the SYG) was intended to provoke discussion at the "Helicopter Availability for NATO Deployed Operations Workshop" at NATO HQ on December 5-6, ¶2007. The UK Deputy PermRep said he hoped NATO efforts would lead to decisions at Bucharest for developing capability.

¶28. (C/NF) Ambassador Nuland said she looked forward to a NAC tasking to begin work on the proposals as soon as possible after the workshop. The Czech Republic, Canada, Spain, and France made statements of support. Hungary suggested the Senior Resource Board begin to work on resource implications of a NATO helicopter initiative. The SYG said he and his staff would look closely at the letter and give a quick response to PermReps on a way ahead.

NULAND